



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**



**EASTERN VIRGINIA RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX
Presquile and James River National Wildlife Refuges**

Annual Activity Report, Fiscal Year 2006

A. HIGHLIGHTS

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

C. LAND ACQUISITION

1. Fee Title

December (Numerous Dates): Rick Jogensen, FWS Region 5, Reality Specialist has been investigating the Hitch property that has recently been placed on the market for sale. This property is the last holding within the James River NWR acquisition boundary. The several hundred acre property is located on the banks of Powells Creek and adjoins the southern portion of the Refuge's Maycocks tract. The Nature Conservancy has also been involved in looking at the potential purchase. TNC's Karen Johnson and Linda Crow have had past dealings with the current owner, Arthur Hitch. The realtor for Mr. Hitch seemed to indicate that the property might be divided into 8 waterfront tracts. At this point, the purchase by the FWS/TNC does not seem likely due to the high asking price- 4 million dollars.

2. Easement

3. Other

December 12: ORP Brame received a call from Bill Robertson, Prince George County, Board of Supervisor regarding the potential purchase of twenty-five acres at Blairs Wharf (one of two inholding properties at James River NWR). The proposed purchase would be part of a plan that includes the sell of the entire 125 acre tract by owner, George Harrison (also owner of Flowerdew Hundred). The County's interest in the property is for developing boat access to the James River. The project would likely include a ramp, marina, parking, and a pavilion. BOS Robertson informed Brame that the entire 125 acre tract was for sell for \$3.9 million dollars. Additionally, VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries representatives, James Adams- Capital Programs Manager, and Steven Kesler-Boat Access Program Manager have been involved in supporting the acquisition of the property by the County. Brame has forwarded all this information to Project Leader McCauley, who has intern forwarded to Karen Mayne, FWS Gloucester Field Office; and John Stasko, Region 5 South chief of Refuges.

I later called Mr. Harrison to request contact information for the realtor handling the sale. In my conversation with Mr. Harrison, he was unaware of any potential plans for development of a boat ramp. He confessed however that the realtor was the point person. He indicated that his hope was to sell to a buyer that would involve only development of two to three home sites. The Realtor's name is Tom Innes, 804-288-5000.

End of June?: FWS Regional Director, Marvin Moriarty contacted ORP Brame regarding background information related to an inquiry made by Prince George County Board of Supervisor Chairman Dr. Joseph Leming to Congressman Forbes. The inquiry involved Mr. Leming's desire to place a public boat ramp in or adjacent to the James River National Wildlife Refuge. Director Moriarty was scheduled to meet with Congressman Forbes to discuss the issue. Brame provided the requested background information.

Later in the day, Director Moriarty contacted Brame by telephone to provide an update from his meeting with the Congressman. It was conveyed that the Congressman understood the conflicts associated with a public boat ramp and a national wildlife refuge supporting fragile bald eagle habitat. The congressman did suggest that a meeting be held with the Dr. Leming and select refuge staff members.

July? ORP Brame, after consulting with Project Leader McCauley, called BOS Chairman, Dr. Leming to setup a meeting to discuss his proposal for a public boat ramp. The meeting was scheduled for July 19th at Dr. Lemings office in Colonial Heights.

July 14: Project Leader McCauley and ORP Brame received word that Dr. Leming was changing the meeting location to the Prince George County Administration Building and invited the following:

The Honorable Robert E. Forehand, member, Board of Supervisors, Representing 2nd District.
H. Martin Robertson, Esq., Counsel to the Board of Supervisors and County Attorney. (Also, was the elected Commonwealth's Attorney for 3 decades.)
Brenda G. Garton, County Administrator
Barney Lee, Director of Parks and Recreation
James Williams, Chairman, Recreation Commission
Jason Gray, District Representative, Congressman J. Randy Forbes
James Davenport, Esq., Alcalde and Faye, Prince George County Federal Lobbyist (may participate by phone)

July 18: Project Leader McCauley and ORP Brame conducted a conference call with Karen Mayne, head of USFWS Ecological Services in Gloucester, VA. The purpose of the meeting was to review strategy and compatability issues as well as garner the backing of the ES office.

July 19: The meeting with Dr. Leming (and company) allowed both camps to discuss the issues related to the County's proposed public boat ramp proposal. Dr. Leming discussed the county's need for a public boat launch. McCauley discussed Compatability Determinations, the endangered species act and bald eagle disturbance issues. Although the meeting began very cordial, it quickly became an argument. Dr. Leming, upon hearing McCauley's negative support for the proposal, mentioned several inaccuracies related to past board of supervisor updates by Brame regarding public use on the refuge. He then began to solicit additional non-consumptive public use opportunities at the Refuge. This was the first time he had mentioned any interest in such. Previously all conversations involved additional hunting dates and the construction of a boat ramp. He even went on to threaten defederalization of the property. Lastly, he informed everyone that he will be drafting a formal complaint to the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The other invited participants remained largely nonvocal throughout the entire meeting. Below are some of Dr. Lemings comments from an e-mail following the meeting.

July 19, 2006

Dear Messrs. McCauley and Brame:

I will develop and forward to you a more thorough and thoughtful letter in the upcoming days in reference to our meeting this morning. However, I wanted to thank you both for having the interest and taking the time to meet with me and other representatives of Prince George County this morning at the County Administration Building in reference to the possibility of a public boat access to the James River in the James River National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you both for your careers in public service to our National Interests as members of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service - and more specifically your respective role(s) in association with the James River National Wildlife Refuge. You are both a credit to the USFWS and our nation.

I express disappointment at Mr. McCauley's "preliminary assessment and opinion" that "I don't believe I'll be able to support a public boat access to the James River through the James River National Wildlife Refuge of either motorized craft or non-motorized craft." Mr. McCauley reportedly based his "preliminary assessment" on both "preliminary research" and his "23 years of experience."

I also express disappointment at Mr. McCauley's inflexibility to improve / expand the public access / use of the Refuge for other (actually any other) public uses. Mr. McCauley cited, amongst other things, inadequate budgetary resources leading to inadequate and contracting personnel resources. Additionally, he cited a proposed Comprehensive Use Plan statutorily required to be completed by 2012. (Note: This is the same plan that Mr. Brame referenced in 2004 never completed and which is now tentatively scheduled to begin pre-planning in 2009.)

Mr. McCauley stated that "I take the compatibility statute very seriously and believe that I am a competent Refuge Manager."

However, I opine that it was obvious that Mr. McCauley was inflexible in his posture to combine the primary function of the Refuge (Wildlife Conservation) with public uses.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, I am disappointed that the interests of the Citizens of Prince George County were not advanced by our meeting.

I represent that the County of Prince George has been, is and will continue to be a "good host" to the stewards of Federalized Prince George County lands. I remain hopeful that Messrs. McCauley and Brame (and the Federal Resources that they cite to be inadequate to permit improved / expanded public use of the James River Wildlife Refuge) will become more "enlightened" and more "enabled" in the future to cause expanded public use opportunities to become a reality. Prince George County stands ready and willing to partner with our Federal Government and the Refuge to both fulfill the primary mission of the Refuge and advance the interests of our citizens.

Again, thank you for having the interest and taking your time to travel to Prince George County and share with us your position. I remain,

Yours in service,

Joe

*Joseph Atkins "Joe" Leming, MD, FAAFP
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Elected From The First Election District
Serving All Citizens Of The County Of Prince George*

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Please visit me and communicate with me through my website @ <http://www.joeleming.com/>

August 1: Project Leader McCauley produced a draft briefing statement and forwarded it to FWS Assistant Refuge Chief, South, John Stasko. As Follows:

DATE: August 1, 2006

BRIEFING FOR THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

PREPARED BY: Joseph F. McCauley, Refuge Manager

FROM: Anthony D. Leger, Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System,

SUBJECT: Proposed Incompatible Use (Public Boat Ramp) at James River NWR

PURPOSE: Prince George County (Virginia) proposes that a public boat ramp be constructed at James River National Wildlife Refuge in direct conflict with the purpose for which the Refuge was established, i.e. bald eagle conservation.

ISSUES: James River NWR was established in 1991 to protect the largest summer roosting area for bald eagles in eastern North America.

On two occasions in 2004 and 2005, individual members of the Prince County Board of Supervisors informally inquired about the potential to construct a public boat ramp on the Refuge. The issue was raised again by U.S. Representative Randy Forbes at a meeting with the Regional Director in June 2006.

In July 2006, refuge staff met with County officials to discuss the boat ramp issue and explain why the proposed use was inconsistent with the purposes of the refuge. They also discussed the relevant legal standards and policy concerning compatible refuge uses.

In response to questions about increasing other public uses on the Refuge, the Refuge Manager explained the effects of current downsizing occurring across the refuge system, and including James River, resulting from expected operational budget declines. He also discussed comprehensive conservation planning, scheduled to begin at James River in 2009, and suggested that would be the best time to work with the County to share our collective visions on the future of James River Refuge.

On July 26, 2006, the Assistant County Administrator confirmed that the Board of Supervisors had voted to send a letter to the Director, with copies to Rep. Forbes and the Refuge Manager, formally asking for public boat access and an increase in general public use at the Refuge.

MAIN DECISION OR MESSAGE: *The Refuge Manager intends to deny use of the Refuge for public boat access, citing well-documented conflicts with the Endangered Species Act*

and the purposes for which the refuge was established.

PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE: The National Wildlife Refuge System supports the Refuge Manager's decision.

CONTACT: Joe McCauley, Refuge Manager, (804) 333-1470/Cyrus Brame, Outdoor Recreation Planner, (804) 829-9020.

August 4: Dr. Leming sends a letter to Dale Hall, Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

SEE ATTACHMENT

September 11: Regional Director Marvin Moriarty provides a four page response to Dr. Leming's official letter. Regional Director Moriarty supports the findings of Project Leader McCauley and informs Leming that a public boat ramp is not compatible with the purposes of the James River NWR. He also stated that no hunting programs will be expanded upon, but will be investigated during the Comprehensive Conservation Plan process. And lastly he encouraged the County to contact appropriate members of the refuge to determine where partnerships can be forged to improve nature based recreation opportunities for the public.

D. PLANNING

1. Master Plan
2. Management Plans
3. Public Participation

February 24: ORP Brame met with Atiba Muse (Atiba.Muse@mail.house.gov), a congressional aid to Congressman Robert C. Scott (D-VA 3rd). This past Tuesday, Brame learned that a representative from Congressman Scott's office would be available from 11AM until 1PM to listen to citizens and organizations from his district. Mr. Muse entertained visits at the Prince George County Administration Building. Brame's purpose in wanting to meet with the representative was threefold: a) to introduce myself personally, b) to briefly provide an overview of James River National Wildlife Refuge and describe some of the activities currently taking place on the Refuge, and c) to lay the foundation for a future, more detailed, meeting in March or April with the station's Project Leader, Joe McCauley. The meeting was very successful. Brame and Muse spoke of approximately 40 minutes. It was offered to have a future on-site meeting in concert with a Refuge bald eagle survey.

April 24: Project leader McCauley, Assistant Manager Owens and ORP Brame met in the Tappahannock office of Congresswoman JoAnn Davis to discuss with representatives from Davis, Allen and Warner the possible effects of the newly developed FWS Region 5 workforce downsizing plan.

May 4: Project leader McCauley and ORP Brame met in the Chesterfield office of Congressman Forbes. The purpose of the visit was to convey the FWS Region 5 workforce downsizing plan to a representative of Congressman Forbes. The representative had initially planned to visit Presquile NWR and meet there, but foot surgery prevented him from making the trip.

May 5: The Hopewell News printed an article on James River NWR for their Weekend Environmental Edition. Mark Dorroh (Rarmcwa@aol.com) interviewed ORP Brame weeks prior.
SEE ATTACHED

4. Compliance with Environmental and Cultural Resource Mandates

November 2: ORP Brame received a report from Blue Collar Archaeology documenting findings from the FWS Challenge Cost Share project. The project included surveys they took place along the banks of the James River in the Maycocks property of the James River NWR. Upon receipt of the document and final invoice, the invoice was forwarded to EVRNWRC Admin. Officer Murphey for payment. Michael Barber and Michael Madden of Blue Collar Archeology presented their findings at an Archeological conference at the College of William and Mary on November 12th. The title of document is The Maycock's Point (44PG40) Beach Collection: The Implications of Controlled Survey in a Disturbed Context, October 2005.

November 30: MM Vick and Shelley Height, USFWS Region 5 Archeologist conducted site visits along the previously investigated archeological sites on Diggs Road. Height collected GPS data around the boundaries. She also evaluated some erosion control measures near the boat ramp.

December 1: ORP Brame and MM Vick met with Shelley Height, USFWS Region 5 Archeologist, to conduct an investigation on the proposed site of a 100 foot tall transmission tower to be erected on the James River NWR. The construction of the 8-foot x 8-foot foundation was initially planned to be adjacent to the soon-to-be erected James River Storage Building (near the Check Station). Formerly the site of the Pavillion. Randomly selected in the area of the proposed project, a 72cm deep by 50 cm square hole was dug by Brame. Height and Vick sifted the soil. The purpose of the sifting was to uncover any evidence of pre-history or archeologically significant materials. The investigation resulted in the discovery of one ½ inch by ½ inch shard that may have been purposely created by man. Height documented the finding and determined that the site of the tower would not be allowed in the proposed location. Begrudgingly, Brame offered an alternate location. At the alternate location (north of the Check Station), Brame dug another 72cm deep by 50 cm square hole. No archeologically significant artifacts were discovered. Height documented that the site was clean and took photos. *See photos.* Brame attempted to find ways to allow the tower to be placed in the original proposed location, but Height advised him against it. She noted that the State Historic Resourced Department would have to get involved and additional site visits would be required by her office, and potentially an archeological contractor would have to be hired (at a cost of no less than \$10,000). The construction of the tower would be delayed by at least six months. Brame decided to stick with the alternative site.

Later in the afternoon, Brame, Vick, and Height conducted site visits at the Hatch House location (see pictures) and the Hatch Cemetary (see pictures). Brame and Height also investigated a 20th century home near the entrance of the Maycocks property. Brame inquired about its historic significance and asked if it would be destroyed and removed. Height seemed to believe there was no importance to the site or the construction style, much like the building at the entrance to the Check Station. Once Height provides Brame written clearance for removal of the buildings, they will be destroyed. However, as requested by the Regional archeologist, the foundations will be left intact.



August 30: ORP Brame had a conference call with Flowerdew Museum archeologist Karen Shriver, Michael Barber, and Tony Operman. The purpose of the call was to prepare for an upcoming

outreach event highlighting some of the findings from the Maycocks Point site. The event, scheduled to take place in the Flowerdew Pavilion on Oct. 5th, is part of VA Archeology Month.

September 28: Archeologist, Michael Barber and his crew of 15 volunteers began a week long project at Maycocks Point in James River NWR. See attached description of work.

5. Research and Investigations-

January 17: ORP Brame met with Chuck Fredrickson, River Keeper for the James River Association. Brame joined Mr. Fredrickson on his boat for a half day water sampling trip. The trip began at Jordon Point and samples were taken from the mouth of Powells Creek (at James River NWR) and adjacent to Presquile NWR.

6. Other

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

March 6: MM Vick celebrated his 39th year of working with Presquile NWR.

March 28: ORP Brame welcomed the birth of his second daughter – Lily Kathryn Brame. It is anticipated the newborn will be participating in Refuge volunteer activities in the coming years.

June 5: David Danks, a biology major from University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, began work as a summer intern. ORP Brame selected Mr. Danks from a pool of qualified applicants. He will spend his 12 week internship working at Presquile, James River and Plum Tree Island. The Refuge will be providing accommodations in the Charles City office travel trailer.

2. Youth Programs

3. Other Manpower Programs

4. Volunteer Program

October 22: During the afternoon, ORP Brame and MM Vick led a volunteer work day at Presquile NWR. Thirteen people (several from the Appalachian Trail Club) convened to spruce up the Refuge. Down trees were cut and removed. Gutters were cleaned and a barn owl box was installed. The event combined for 52 volunteer hours. Volunteer Thurman Pelter helped cook hotdogs as a mid afternoon snack.

November 19: Volunteer Michael Larkin began installing flashing along the chimney at the James River NWR Check Station. Completed two volunteer hours.

November 26: Volunteer Michael Larkin installed flashing along the chimney at the James River NWR Check Station. Completed two volunteer hours.

December 12: ORP Brame met with volunteer Gretchen Young to discuss the development of an interpretive display for Presquile NWR highlighting invasive species.

December 14: Volunteer Michael Larkin completed installation of the flashing along the chimney at the James River NWR Check Station. Completed two volunteer hours.

January 13: Three volunteers joined ORP Brame in several improvement projects at Presquile NWR.

The group stayed five hours and cleaned gutters, removed wood, and attached shingles.

February 22: ORP Brame partnered with the Charles City County Public Schools, Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) for a project to build 50 prothonatary warbler boxes with sixth grade students. The constructed boxes will be installed at Presquile National Wildlife Refuge to replace some of the older boxes. This spring will be the 20th year of the FWS's partnership with VCU's prothonatary monitoring project at Presquile NWR. Twenty volunteers participated in the three hour project. See photo.



March 18: Twenty-five volunteer joined in a volunteer effort to improve facilities and habitat at Presquile NWR. Dedicated folks from the Appalachian Trail Club, the Audubon Society, and elsewhere helped install entrance signs and an owl nesting box, trim trees, remove fences, and clean buildings. The effort resulted in a more beautiful refuge and 125 hours of service. See photo.

April 22: For the "Earth Day on the Island" special event, volunteers helped lead nature walks, conduct interpretive programs and coordinate access to Presquile NWR. Although the day was rainy and overcast, the efforts of the volunteers were not dampened.

May 18: Volunteer Michael Larkin assisted the James River NWR with Check Station improvements. Four hours of service was donated.

September 9, 11, 22, and 23: Over 120 volunteers participated in four days of tree planting at Presquile NWR. The project was part of a larger effort to install 3,500 trees along 20 acres of riparian habitat on the western and southern edge of the Refuge. Partner organizations (the James River Association, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and the Audubon Society, helped orchestrate the activity with ORP Brame. In the four days, over 100 trees were planted and 480 hours donated to our public lands. See photo.



September 30: Participants of the Presquile Planting Project continued efforts to install a total of 3,500 native trees by utilizing National Public Lands Day to attract and promote the event. Over 36 volunteers and partners donated 200 hours in this ambitious tree planting project. Local volunteers at Presquile joined thousands of others at 1,000 National Public Lands Day (NPLD) sites nationwide. The theme for this year's event was "Lend a Hand to America's Lands," and volunteer from around the Richmond Metro area certainly responded in kind. Approximately 378 native trees were planted. SEE ATTACHMENT

5. Funding

6. Safety

7. Technical Assistance

8. Other

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

1. General

2. Wetlands

4. Croplands

5. Grasslands

May 12: ORP Brame coordinates with Peggy Combs to conduct a non-comprehensive wildflower inventory of the fields at Presquile NWR. SEE ATTACHED.

May 20: Contracted applicator Matt Crabb sprayed approximately 250 acres of Johnsongrass in the upland field of Presquile NWR. This was the first of two sprays to be conducted this year. Additionally, this is the third year of invasive control using herbicide. Glyphosate-based products have been used each time. However this is the first year the Refuge has used Razor. Glypro had been used previously. Mr. Crabb uses a fixed wing aircraft to conduct the spraying.

August 23: Contracted applicator Matt Crabb sprayed approximately 250 acres of Johnsongrass in the upland field of Presquile NWR. This was the last of two sprays to be conducted this year.

6. Other Habitats

Riparian Habitat

Dec. 6: ORP Brame communicated with Amber Foster of the James River Association regarding the possibility of developing a large-scale Riparian planting project at Presquile. It was suggested to involve additional organizations, one in particular the Richmond Audubon.

January 9: ORP Brame met at Europa Restaurant in Richmond to discuss the riparian buffer planting project with Amber Foster JRA, Hadley Miliken Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Aimee Weldon, National Audubon. The meeting was very positive and the project quite ambitious. It will require a good deal of orchestration by all participating partners to devise and complete.

Feb 17: ORP Brame, Amber Foster JRA, Stacey Moulds, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Aimee Weldon, National Audubon met at the Old Refuge office in Prince George to discuss the planting project. The size and scope of the project began to be defined. Twenty acres were to be planted with 3,000 + trees. Some funding would come from all partners but the bulk would come from the James River Association from tree and material purchases. The Alliance would promote the event, contribute \$4000 to invasive species control. The Audubon would contribute 1000-3000 dollars. All organizations would help in recruitment of volunteer labor. FWS staff would conduct much of the prep work and on-site supervision.

March 7: Project Leader McCauley, ORP Brame, ES office staff K. Krzywicki, S. Lingenfelter, J. Schmerfeld and James River Association employees Chuck Frederickson and Amber Foster met to discuss possible NRDA projects at Presquile NWR. The primary suggestions involved riparian plantings along the south and western edge of the Refuge. If approved the project would add additional acreage to the 20-acre riparian planting projects scheduled for the Fall. Bulkhead repair was also mentioned.

June 16: ORP Brame met with Amber Foster JRA, new director Leslie Middleton, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Aimee Weldon, National Audubon at Presquile NWR. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the upcoming planting project and conduct a comprehensive site visit.

July 17: ORP Brame had a conference call with Amber Foster JRA, Leslie Middleton, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Aimee Weldon, National Audubon at Presquile NWR. The purpose of the call was to discuss the upcoming planting project and continue with planning.

August 22: ORP Brame and Intern Danks met with Amber Foster, JRA at a local Charles City farm to obtain tree tubes, stakes and other materials needed for the Presquile Planting project. The items were then transported to Presquile.

August 24: ORP Brame had a conference call with Amber Foster JRA, Leslie Middleton, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Aimee Weldon, National Audubon at Presquile NWR. The purpose of the call was to discuss the upcoming planting project and continue with planning.



September 9, 11, 22, and 23: Over 120 volunteers participated in four days of tree planting at Presquile NWR. The project was part of a larger effort to install 3,500 trees along 20 acres of riparian habitat on the western and southern edge of the Refuge. Partner organizations (the James River Association, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and the Audubon Society, helped orchestrate the activity with ORP Brame. In the four days, over 1500 trees were planted and 480 hours donated to our public lands.

Forest Habitat

May 10: Biologist Spencer, Steve Hubner and ORP Brame met with Carolina Silvics at James River NWR regarding an upcoming 2000 acre timber cruise project on the Refuge. The group discussed logistings and toured the project site.

May 22: Carolina Silvic, a company out of Edenton, NC, began the timber cruise at James River NWR.

August : The 2006 Timber Inventory for James River National Wildlife Refuge was completed and forwarded to Biologist Spencer. SEE ATTACHMENT.

7. Grazing

9. Fire Management-

November 25: Refuge Biologist, Sandy Spencer completed the draft James River NWR Fire Mangement Plan. Copies of the plan were distributed for comment.

December 2: ORP Brame requested to schedule a tentative January '06 date to conduct a prescribed burn at Presquile NWR with FWS Fire Management Officer, Tim Craig.

December 5: ORP Brame was contacted by telephone by FWS Forester Steve Hubner regarding use of Sammy Garcia as a contractor for the proposed 116 acre pine thinning project at James River NWR. Brame recounted the August site visit by Saul Garcia and concurred that the Refuge should proceed forward with the only bid received for the project (Garcia's), as opposed to resubmitting bid opportunities.

January 27: ORP Brame and other EVRNWRC staff participated in the annual Pack Test at Essex High School.

February 15: ORP Brame and other EVRNWRC staff attended the annual Fire Refresher at the VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation Fire Cache in Colonial Heights.

February 24: ORP Brame met with Flavio Hernandez, representative from Forest Garcia Service, LLC. The purpose of the site visit was to finalize plans for the 116 acre pine thinning project at James River NWR. After walking the site and discussing the scope of work, a start date was scheduled for February 28th. ORP Brame and Biologist Spencer will be on hand to insure the project begins as outlined in the contract.



March 6 & 8: ORP Brame sent out press releases and contacted appropriate organizations in preparation for the prescribed burn to occur on Presquile NWR. See press release.

March 9: To culminate the habitat management actions by Presquile NWR staff, a prescribed burn was conducted on 250 acres of upland field. The area was dominated by the invasives Johnsongrass and Canada Thistle. The purpose of the burn was to: reduce the biomass standing dead vegetation to facilitate application of herbicides; return nutrients locked up in above ground biomass to the soil; reduce the height-density of the vegetation and create more openness at ground level; reduce the spread of invasive plant species; to set back succession; and restore/ perpetuate natural ecological processes.

In accordance with the US Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Safety Office, and as dictated in the Presquile National Wildlife Refuge Fire Management Plan and Prescribed Burn Plan documents, local fire offices, adjacent neighbors, and the general public were notified of the proposed activity. The US Fish and Wildlife Service was the primary agency operating the burn, however, additional staff from local fire departments, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the National Park Service's Petersburg and Richmond parks also assisted. The effort involved a total of twenty certified firefighters.

Orchestrating the burn was US Fish and Wildlife Service Burn Boss, Tim Craig, based out of the Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Fire Office. Not only did Craig have to find the right amount of trained firefighters, but he also organized a fleet of fire fighting equipment. Two pumper trucks, a Marsh Master and several pickups were ferried to the refuge prior to the burn. Aside from the

volunteers coming from outside agencies, staffers from Presquile National Wildlife Refuge and the Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex were instrumental in making the burn run successfully.

As for public safety, no visitors were permitted on the island the day of the burn. In fact, the Refuge is only opened to the public on a very limited basis throughout the year.



Refuge Biologist, Sandy Spencer

March 28: Work was completed on the 116-acre pine thinning project at James River NWR. Although the project produced a substantial amount of ground fuel, the remaining habitat will clearly benefit from additional light, nutrients, and species diversity.

September 25: A representative from Forest Technologies came for his annual inspection of the James River NWR weather station.

10. Pest Control-

November 1: ORP Brame cut down five non-native, invasive Mimosa trees along the southern banks of Presquile NWR. Numerous other trees remain, but will cut prior to Spring.

11. Water Rights

November 17: ORP Brame received, at his request, an e-mail from Chuck Frederickson, River Keeper for the James River Association keeper@jamesriverassociation.org, highlighting water quality bacteria results for Powell Creek and Bailey Creek. Several of the samples were taken in waters adjacent to the borders of the James River NWR. Those results indicate that Colony Forming Units of Ecoli were better/cleaner than in areas tested further upstream (further from the Refuge).

G. WILDLIFE

2. Threatened and/or Endangered Species

April 28: ORP Brame, and MM Vick conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James

River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 51 eagles were observed.

May 16: ORP Brame, and MM Vick conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 52 eagles were observed.

May 30: ORP Brame, and MM Vick conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 42 eagles were observed.

June 16: ORP Brame, and Intern David Danks conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 36 eagles were observed.

July 3: ORP Brame, and Intern Danks conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 31 eagles were observed.

July 19: ORP Brame, and Intern Danks conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 33 eagles were observed.

August 9: ORP Brame, and Intern Danks conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 38 eagles were observed.

August 23: ORP Brame, and Intern Danks conducted an eagle survey along Powells Creek and the James River. Within the transect from Windmill Point to the Refuge boat landing, 30 eagles were observed.

SEE ATTACHMENT

3. Waterfowl

November 18 and 22: ORP Brame, in preparation for the Presquile NWR deer hunt, entered the two interior creeks. In his travels he flushed approximately 1000 ducks each day. The species were identified as black duck, mallards and wood duck.

4. Marsh and Water Birds

5. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns and Allied Species

6. Raptors

8. Game Animals

December 3: A deer was harvested at Presquile NWR during the deer hunt had growths on it's leg. ORP Brame contacted DGIF biologist, Brian Moyer who described the growth as "Deer Warts". Aside from limiting movement and sight the grows are not life threatening and the venison could be eaten.



Other

November 10: Dr. Joy Ware and Ann Wright, both Virginia Commonwealth University employees, meet with ORP Brame to assess possible site locations for reptile and amphibian studies at James River NWR. The study will be conducted in the Spring of 2006 and will also include Presquile NWR. During the hour long tour to various sites, two species were documented (see photos). A similar study was completed by Dr. Ware at Rappahannock River Valley NWR in 2005.

December 18: ORP Brame met with Richmond Audubon Society members Caroline Coe, Julie Kacmarcik and Brian Townsend to conduct the annual Christmas Bird Count at Presquile NWR. Species totals are forthcoming. The cold rainy morning produced approximately 10 eagle sightings.

April 29: Dr. Joy Ware, VCU Biology Dept. and her team of herpatologist met at James River NWR to conduct a reptile and amphibian survey.



February 17 and 18: The Richmond Audubon Society was invited by ORP Brame to participate in the 9th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count at Presquile NWR and James River NWR. The nationwide event involves people of all ages and levels of experience and skill to record bird species from their back yard, or anywhere else birds may be found. Five participants recorded species at Presquile and James River NWR on Feb 17th. An additional eight people again recorded species at James River NWR on Feb. 18th. Twelve bird species were observed at Presquile during a thirty minute, weather shortened visit and 51 species observed during the two days at James River. Detailed results for the refuges and the nation can be found at <www.birdsource.org/gbbc>.

May 13: Dr. Joy Ware, VCU Biology Dept. and her team of herpatologist met at James River NWR to continue an on-going reptile and amphibian survey.

May 19: ORP Brame met with JD from the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The purpose of the meeting was for Brame to introduce JD, new to the Department, to the various elements of the local Refuges. They took a jon boat tour of Presquile and a driving tour of James River NWR. JD's specialty is herpetology. Brame contact JD after hearing him speak at a Charles City Ruritan Club meeting.

May 30- June 2: Mike Stinsen, contracted ornithologist, began annual breeding bird point counts at James River NWR. Mike ? utilized the travel trailer during his three-day stay.

July: ORP Brame, with occasional help from Intern Danks, conducted some insect inventories and collections at the VCU Rice property, Presquile NWR, and the Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery. The effort was largely part of a class sponsored by VCU. Collections were used for interpretation to Refuge visitors.



August 26: Dr. Joy Ware, VCU Biology Dept. and her team of herpatologist met at James River NWR to continue an on-going reptile and amphibian survey.

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General

April 22: “Earth Day on the Island” was a special event designed to attract visitors and attention to Presquile NWR.. Volunteers helped lead nature walks, interpretive programs and coordinated access to the island. Although the day was rainy and overcast approximately 30 visitors participated.



April 27: The Village News, local weekly for Chester, VA, published a nice article about the recent Earth Day event.

August 3: ORP Brame participates in the quarterly Regional Visitor Services conference call.

2. Outdoor Classrooms – Students

January 12: ORP Brame met with Cassie Mealer and Terri Foster of Flowerdew Hundred Museum to introduce himself to the public use specialist at James River NWR's neighboring property. He also briefly discussed possible joint efforts.

February 14: ORP Brame met with Cassie Mealer and Terri Foster of Flowerdew Hundred Museum to discuss in detail about forming a partnership and applying for the NFWF Nature of Learning grant.

February 27: ORP Brame met with Herman, Prince George County Cooperative Extension agent and 4-H coordinator to discuss possible joint programming efforts. In particular, the two discussed applying for a Nature of Learning grant in association with the Jr. Master Gardeners.

March: ORP Brame informed Herman that as a result of the dramatic reductions scheduled for implementation throughout Region 5, that no new programming will occur in the immediate future. Brame apologized for taking up his time in the previous meetings.

3. Outdoor Classrooms – Teachers

June 16: ORP Brame met with Michelle Stolle, new director of the Friends of Chesterfield Riverfront and Suzie Gilley, education specialist with DGIF at the Refuge's Charles City office. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed August In-Service Teacher Training at Presquile NWR. The meeting was productive and it was agreed to begin recruitment of facilitators and update Chesterfield County School representative Jerome Lloyd of the plans.

July 11: ORP Brame conducted a Bald Eagle tour as part of a Virginia Commonwealth University teacher environmental education course. Brame interpreted the past and present eagle population while being driven in a DGIF operated boat. Several boats and local naturalist were involved in the effort. The group traveled the waters between the James River NWR and the VCU Rice property.



August 30: ORP Brame coordinated the support of excellent partners (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Suzie Gilley, Wildlife Education Coordinator/Project WILD State Coordinator Virginia Commonwealth University, Anne Wright Coordinator, Life Sciences Outreach EducationRichmond Audubon Society, John Coe, Education Coordinator), for the annual In-Service Teacher Training at Presquile NWR. Fifteen Chesterfield County School district 6th and 7th grade

science teachers participated in sessions related to entomology, watersheds, and migration.

Below, are the responses from the fifteen participating teachers, as extrapolated from their evaluation forms.

100% of the teachers felt the instructors clearly conveyed the subject matter and accomplished the training objectives at all three stations.

100% of the teachers would recommend this course to their colleagues.

Overall, 10 teachers felt the training was "excellent", 5 teachers felt the training was "good".

4. Interpretive Foot Trails

October 25: ORP Brame led a group of ten home school teachers and students along the Powells Creek path at James River NWR. The group identified scat, deer rubs, and beaver sign.

5. Interpretive Tour Routes

October 22: ORP Brame led 11 visitors around Presquile NWR on the 28-foot pontoon boat. Several eagles were sighted during the morning sojourn. After the hour-long trip, the boat was docked at the newly completed dock (located on the western side of the island) and participants were provided a guided tour with Richmond Audubon naturalist, John Coe. Many of the trees near the old homestead were in fruit: Pecan, Buckeye, Osage Orange, and Pear. Fox and groundhogs were observed. The trip was advertised as part of the James River Days in conjunction with the James River Association.

October 27: ORP Brame and MM Vick led a group of 16 visitors around Presquile NWR on the 28 foot pontoon boat. The hour and half trip offered interpretation by Brame and Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation naturalist, Mark Batista. The participants were recruited through advertisement on the Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation website. Numerous eagles were observed.

March 31st: An article was published in the Washington Post about the James River John Smith Water Trail (including James River NWR - a highlighted site)
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/30/AR2006033000786.html>
Through previous discussions with Paula Neeley of Historic James and contributor to the article, ORP Brame provided general information about the refuge.

March 31st: ORP Brame met with Jennifer Wampler, trails coordinator for the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation and Kim Hodge, education specialist for the James River Association. The purpose for the meeting was to discuss on-site and off-site locations for two John Smith Water Trail interpretive signs associated with James River NWR and Presquile NWR (yet to be produced). The signs will be provided at no cost to the USFWS. Some text and image development will be required of Refuge staff.

June 3: ORP Brame a small group of participants on an early morning canoe/kayak trip up Powells Creek. The event was scheduled in cooperation with the James River Association as part of the annual James River Days. The group observed, on this misty, overcast day, eagles, herons and a white-tail deer.

September 2: ORP Brame canceled a previously scheduled canoe/kayak trip along Powells Creek. The event scheduled in cooperation with the James River Association as part of the James River Days had to be cancelled due to inclement weather.

July 5: ORP Brame orchestrated a trip for Richmond Times Dispatch outdoors writer, Lee Graves and VA Department of Conservation and Recreation, representative Nathan Lott to access the James

River NWR to launch kayaks into the James. The purpose was to show Mr. Graves a portion of the newly developed John Smith River Trail for an upcoming article. Brame provided a kayak for Mr. Lott and requested Intern Danks to join the adventure. The group saw numerous eagles.

July 30: Lee Graves of Richmond Times Dispatch published an article based, in part, from his recent James River NWR trip on July 5th.

August 25: ORP Brame provided JRA's Kim Hodge with narrative text for a proposed interpretive sign highlighting the John Smith water trail.

6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

7. Other Interpretative Programs

8. Hunting-

October 1- 15: Thirteen days of white-tailed deer archery hunts were offered at James River NWR. Eighteen hunters pre-registered for season or daily passes. Participation during the hunt equated to 58 hunter use days. As in 2004, only one deer was harvested – a button buck.

October 14: Lee Graves, reporter for the Richmond Times Dispatch, published an article as a result of ORP Brame's Refuge deer hunt press release. The article read nicely and a thank you was sent to Graves by Brame. See Article Attached.

November 10: ORP Brame held the Presquile NWR Deer Hunt lottery drawing at the Refuge Office in Charles City. Applicants were selected for 50 slots each of the two days. Over 80 submissions were received for each day.

November 5: Conducted first of two white-tailed deer muzzleloader hunts at James River NWR. Two deer were harvested with 23 hunters participating. Temperatures reached near 80 degrees by midday.

November 12: Conducted second and final white-tailed deer muzzleloader hunt at James River NWR. Six deer were harvested with 20 hunters participating.

November 19, 21, 25, & 26: Conducted white-tailed deer shotgun hunt at James River NWR. One hundred and forty-seven hunters participated during the four days and harvested seven deer. Participation was lower than in the previous year. Several possible reasons for the drop in participation: colder than normal temperatures- one rain day, one hunt fell on a regional doe day, dogs from area hunt clubs were not running in adjacent properties.

November 23: Conducted first of two white-tailed deer shotgun hunts on Presquile NWR. Nineteen deer were harvested by 54 pre-selected participants. Half of the day's harvest came from the creek stands and the other half came from the field and swamp. See nice 6-point buck harvested (Pictured)

December 3: Conducted second and final white-tailed deer shotgun hunt on Presquile NWR. Temperatures ranged from 25 to 45 degrees, with overcast skies. Eight deer were harvested with 29 hunters participating. One of the deer harvested (see pictures and e-mail) had growths on its legs and chest. The Brian Moyer, Biologist, VDGIF was contacted.

SEE ATTACHED POWERPOINT OVERVIEW OF 2005 REFUGE DEER HUNT

January 27: EVRNWRC staff meet to discuss the past and future hunt programs at their respective refuges.

August 9: James River Archery and Presquile Shotgun press releases are sent out to local media

outlets.

August 14: The Progress Index published an article highlighting the refuge deer hunts.

August 18 & 19: Pre-application scout dates are offered at Presquile NWR.

September 23-30, 2006: Scouting dates provided for potential archery hunters.

9. Fishing

June 23: ORP Brame, Mike Ostrander (James River Fishing School), and a VCU representative conducted the first of two “Go Fish” events geared to promoting fishing in local youth. The Refuge’s 28 –foot pontoon boat and the new boat dock and pier were used as the fishing locations for the twelve middle school–aged students. The group saw eagles and caught shad catfish and perch.



July 21: MM Vick, Intern Danks, Mike Ostrander (James River Fishing School), and a VCU representative conducted the second of two “Go Fish” events geared to promoting fishing in local youth. The Refuge’s 28 –foot pontoon boat and the new boat dock and pier were used as the fishing locations for the twelve middle school–aged students.

11. Wildlife Observation-

October 16: Kristi Orcutt <OrcuttK@chesterfield.gov>, Chestefield County Parks and Recreation, led a group of ten people on a canoe/kayak trip along the interior creeks of Presquile NWR. Permission was granted by ORP Brame for the unchaparoned Sunday visit. Certain stipulations were required by Brame.

October 29: A special “Field Day” was offered at Presquile NWR. The Refuge provided visitors with boat transportation to and from the island from 9AM until 3PM. Visitors were allowed to walk the trails, go up the observation tower and stop in at the Visitor Contact Station. Although minimally advertised, thirty people participated. Several families from the Bermuda Hundred community and girl scout troop 722 took part in the event. The day was also used as a scout day for the upcoming deer hunt.

May 4: ORP Brame and MM Vick led fourteen pre-registered visitors on a pontoon trip around Presquile NWR. The Refuge event was a joint effort with Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department. Participants of the two hour trip observed fifteen eagles.

May 6: ORP Brame and MM Vick led sixteen pre-registered visitors on a pontoon trip around and to Presquile NWR. The Refuge event was a joint venture between the USFWS and the James River Association – as part of the James River Days. Fourteen eagles were observed. A baby killdeer was nearby while the mother drew attention from the young while pretending to have a broken wing.

May 7: ORP Brame provided Josh Shell unchaperoned access to Presquile. Mr. Shell access the refuge via canoe for wildlife observation.

May 18: ORP Brame and MM Vick escorted Gordon Adamski and family to Presquile . The group observed five eagles and 16 osprey

September 2: ORP Brame was to conduct a water tour in association with the James River Association and the James River Days. The two hour canoe/kayak trip was canceled due to inclement weather.

17. Law Enforcement

November 21: Refuge Officer Laskowski cited two James River NWR hunters with tickets for having loaded shotguns in the vehicle.

December 10: MM Vick was contacted by local residents of a car thief seeking refuge within the property of the James River NWR. Vick was aware of the earlier activities (theft of the car and subsequent accident) through notices from his scanner. The car theft took place in Suffolk, VA and the crash occurred off the Refuge property in Prince George County. An individual, renting property from the Harrisons's at Blair Wharf (adjacent to the Refuge), found the thief walking the banks of the James River. He ultimately entered the Refuge's Maycocks property. Police were contacted and Vick was notified. The gates of the refuge were opened for the search. The assailant initially escaped being captured, but later in the day Vick again notified the police that the man was seen walking on route 639 toward Flowerdew Hundred Museum. Police responded immediately and the man was apprehended. Resulting information showed the man was of Hispanic origin and had an expired Visa, by five years- thusly an illegal immigrant.

May 2: ORP Brame installed a sign post with a Presquile NWR specific "Unauthorized Entry" and "Blue Goose" sign. The signs were placed on the shoreline of the southern portion of Presquile. During warm season months, trespassing has been observed along the sandy shore – particularly on weekends and at low tides.

June 16: ORP Brame observed persons trespassing along the south shore of Presquile, blatantly in front of the "unauthorized entry sign". No contact was made. See picture.



June 30: ORP Brame met with two DGIF Game Wardens who had reported a trespass violation that they thought occurred on Refuge property. The suspect had been collecting artifacts (a 20th century coin and some glass) along the James River shoreline near the James River NWR boundary. After meeting with the Wardens, it turned out the violation was just off the Refuge's western-most boundary. Brame informed the officers that the violation occurred on Tommy Bank's property. Flowerdew Museum Archeologist, Karen Shriver, was also notified by Brame.

August 4: ORP Brame met with new Virginia Zone officer, Joe Mojica. The two met in the Refuge's Charles City office and review maps of the refuges and discussed issues. A future site visit is planned at each of the EVRNWRC refuges.

August 23: ORP Brame noticed that old box woods and yard vegetation was dumped on the entrance road to the James River NWR Check Station. The material was moved out of the road and placed in an area that would promote small mammal protection.

August 24: ORP Brame met with Zone Officer Joe Mojica and toured James River NWR and Presquile refuges.

18. Cooperating Associations

November 4: ORP Brame, at the prompting of the Richmond Audubon, provided a wish list of activities, projects and materials for Presquile NWR. Being the Refuge's cooperating association, the Richmond Audubon has collected \$1000 for expenditure on Presquile.

February 24: ORP Brame met with Bob Wynne, board member for the Richmond Audubon Society. The meeting was to discuss Presquile NWR projects that would be suitable for at National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Friends grant. Several projects were discussed and a draft proposal will be evaluated by the Audubon on March 14th. Application deadline is April 3rd.

May 16: ORP Brame met with Ellen Ackerman, Richmond Audubon president and Sue Rid and Bob Wynne, also of Audubon. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the status of our joint

organizations. Although the Richmond Audubon adopted Presquile NWR to be part of the Audubon Refuge Keepers (ARK) back in the late 1990's it was still unclear as to what, if anything, that status meant. As advocates and promoters of programming at the Refuge, ARK sponsorship was to continue up to the 2003 Refuge System Centennial. It was presumed that the partnership between Presquile and Richmond Audubon was to continue after that as a cooperating association. That had proven to be the case, but Ms. Ackerman brought the question of status to Brame's attention when completing a grant application. The face to face meeting at the Refuge's Charles City office help determine that the cooperating association status serves both organizations best. On the Audubon side, they do not have to put all there actions into on property. On the Refuge side, various organizations can join to help the refuge without feeling they are stepping on the "Friends Group". Grants and joint projects can continue as in the past.

June 15: Project leader McCauley and ORP Brame met at a Midlothian church for a Richmond Audubon Society board meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the current status of the FWS/RAS relationship and for FWS staff to convey staffing and resource reduction issues related with Presquile NWR. The meeting was extremely positive and Audubon offered full support of our efforts. They also discussed how the proposed Important Bird Area designation for Presquile might assist projects and manpower. Brame provided RAS with a copy of the America's National Wildlife Refuge System DVD.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

1. New Construction-

October 4: ORP Brame and MM Vick participated in a Pre-construction meeting for the proposed 32'x72' storage building at James River NWR. Butler, Inc., Project Manager Mike Ragsdale and Lester contractor Tom White were in attendance. SEE PICTURE. Final logistics were discussed and a tentative completion date of December 23rd was set.

October 12: ORP Brame met with Harbor Dock and Dredge representatives to discuss final logistics for the Presquile NWR dock construction project. The 70-foot pier and floating dock will be installed and ultimately connected to the boardwalk located on the western side of the island.



October 21: Construction was completed on the pier and floating dock at Presquile NWR.

October 21-26: ORP Brame used pressure treated materials to connect the pier to the existing boardwalk at Presquile NWR.

December 21: Building materials for the new James River NWR storage building were delivered to the construction site. A Lester Building tractor-trailer full of beams, trusses, and other materials off-loaded the items. Construction is tentatively set for Dec. 26th. Final copies of building specs. have

been received.

December 23: Additional building materials (windows, doors) were delivered to the construction site (see above narrative).

December 29: Contractors arrived at 7:00 AM and began working on the foundation and structure support for the new James River NWR storage building. The team discovered that the existing concrete slab was measured at 10 inches deep. As a result, the construction plans will have to be altered to accommodate the new findings.

February 1: ORP Brame met with Walter Carter of Carter Heating and Air. Mr. Carters Company will be installing the HAC system in the James River NWR storage building.

March 19: Contractors resolved the final outstanding issue related to the construction of the James River NWR storage building (repair the overhead door seal). With that the building was complete. ORP Brame and MM Vick then began moving materials tools and equipment in the new structure.

July 10: The construction of a 100 foot transmission tower was completed. The tower will be used for FWS radio communication at local refuges and the fish hatchery in Charles City.



2. Rehabilitation-

August 23: ORP Brame and Intern Danks installed the new Main Entrance sign at James River NWR.



3. Major Maintenance

October 19: Three sets of swinging pole gates were acquired from Hercules Fence Company. The gates are planned to be installed during the year at James River NWR.

November 14: Two dump truck loads of crush and run gravel were delivered and spread by MM Vick along the lower segment of the Hunter Circle Road at James River NWR. This action was an extension of roadwork done on September 28th, when larger stone was delivered and spread near the southern culvert of the same road.

December 29: Harbor Dock and Dredge contractors completed the Presquile NWR ferry landing dredge project. The team removed 100 cubic yards of silt material from the edge of the mainland bank, where the ferry is typically docked. The three-day project was completed with permits from the Army Corp of Engineers and approval by Virginia Marine Resources Commission. The cable operated ferry can now maneuver regardless of the tidal flow. Prior to the dredge, the ferry was only operational from 1-2 hours before and 1-2 hours after high tides.



April 14: ORP Brame participated in a conference call with the Federal Highway Administration. The purpose of the call was to discuss actions for repairing the culvert at James River NWR's Hunter Circle Road. The culvert has been "blown out" and road impassable since 1999. Plans to repair it have been promised for years. However, the project is anticipated to begin this year.

May 5: MM Vick, Project leader McCauley, MM Owens, and ORP Brame replaced the two year old, 700-foot cable that supports the Presquile Cable Ferry. The replacement effort took about 4 hours. MM Vick demonstrated how the repair is to be conducted in future years. MM Vick may be retiring in the coming year.

May 30: The Federal Highway Administration and member of James River NWR staff to discuss the proposed culvert project on the Hunter Circle Road. The group was led by ORP Brame and Assistant Manager Owens on a tour of the site.

June/July: ORP Brame, MM Vick and Intern Danks replaced the 60+ beams on the island and mainland side cable ferry ramps. The construction replaced the old creosol timbers. Some of the wood was decomposing and had been in place since the 1950s.



July 26: ORP Brame assisted Troy Wheeler of the Federal Highway Administration as he conducted elevation surveys for the James River NWR culvert project.

August 2: A representative from Cedar Crest Marina came to Presquile NWR at the request of ORP Brame to assess and provide an estimate for repair of the island-side metal dolphins (metal I-beams) and bulkhead repairs. UPDATE: the company never replied with estimates nor returned phone calls. The reason is believed that the project would not be large enough to justify pursuing it.

August 15: Paul Smith of Harbor Dock and Dredge came to Presquile NWR at the request of ORP Brame to assess and provide an estimate for repair of the island-side metal dolphins (metal I-beams) and bulkhead repairs. UPDATE: the company never replied with estimates nor returned phone calls. The reason is believed that the project would not be large enough to justify pursuing it.

4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement-

November 21: ORP Brame faxed General Services Administration (GSA) the purchaser receipts for two excessed items: 1961 Cub Tractor, International Farmall (PN 446459) and 1982 Forklift, Allison Chalmers (589089). The fax confirms the items were removed by the purchaser from James River NWR, as required.

January 24: ORP Brame met with FWS real property coordinator, Kevin Ortel to update him on property at James River NWR and Presquile NWR. He also inspected the new Butler Building constructed at James River NWR.

February 13: Billy Adams picked up the excessed Ford tractor from James River NWR. Mr. Adams acquired the property through GSA auction.

5. Communications Systems

6. Computer Systems

8. Other

May 31: After weeks of work, all furniture, documents, and other objects had been completely removed from the old Presquile NWR/ James River NWR headquarters. Located in the town of Prince George, this office was provided through GSA, but had been largely unused by the USFWS since a restructuring took place in early 2000. As a cooperating partner, the James River Association, primarily the River Keeper, was allowed to utilize the building for offices and meeting space. All move out paperwork was completed and an exit inspection was completed. ORP Brame oversaw the process and signed appropriate paperwork. Most of the files and historical records for Presquile and James River NWR are now housed in the Charles City Office (11116 Kimages Road).



July 18: ORP Brame met with Federal Highway Administration to discuss the LTAP Road Inventory and tour James River NWR and Presquile. Trail systems were highlighted.

July 27 & 28: MM Vick and Intern Danks erected three pole gates at James River NWR (two on Hunter Circle Road and one on the southern Hatch Road entrance).



J. OTHER ITEMS

1. Cooperative Programs-

October 6: ORP Brame met with Cliff Mealer cliffmflowerdew@aol.com, Project Manager at Flowerdew Hundred Plantation. The two discussed possible partnerships and outreach programs. Brame toured Mealer around James River NWR and the Check Station building. Mealer offered opportunities to meet with other Flowerdew staff to establish programming. Maps and ideas were exchanged in this very cordial meeting of adjacent land managers.

November 2: ORP Brame met with Flowerdew Plantation hunt coordinator, Rudy Boshier to discuss possible coordination with seasonal hunt programs. During the meeting the two discussed their respective programs and voiced interest in avoiding any safety conflicts along the borders. Brame provided a list of hunt dates planned for James River NWR and encouraged open lines of communication.

December 9: ORP Brame met with John Vitta (804-795-1514), representative for the Virginia Nature Conservancy at the James River NWR Check Station. Vitta had previously contacted Brame to set-up the appointment. Vitta informed Brame that every two years the Nature Conservancy evaluates the status of their former properties. Brame verbally reviewed the projects and programs of the past two years at James River NWR. He also touched on some of the future projects scheduled for the upcoming year. The hour-long interview satisfied Vitta's needs. Afterwards, Brame asked Vitta to try to orchestrate a site visit with a group of Conservancy members for a spring tour of the Refuge.

April 27: ORP Brame attended the James River Advisory Council meeting. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to network and learn about other conservation programs occurring with the area. The meeting took place at Artworks in Richmond.

3. Training and Items of Interest

January 10: The entire Eastern Virginia Rivers NWR Complex staff met at Rappahannock NWR for their quarterly staff meeting

March 13: ORP Brame participated in projects on Plum Tree Island NWR (Tower Demolition Prep), Presquile NWR (Prescribed Burn Assessment), and James River NWR (Maintenance Shed Construction Inspection) all in the same day. Given that two of the refuges are only accessible by boat and located over 80 miles apart, it was quite a full day.

March 16: ORP Brame drove to the National Conservation Training Center to attend the Project Leader's Conference. The purpose for the visit was to hear of the, much discussed, downsizing plans unveiled to the Region. Brame contends that it was worth the day-long trip (to WV and back) as the dramatic reductions were disclosed to all the project leaders. After the meeting a somber audience was speechless.

March 20: The entire Eastern Virginia Rivers NWR Complex staff met at Rappahannock NWR for their quarterly staff meeting.

April 10: ORP Brame completed the required annual on-line IT training.

May 25: ORP Brame attended a Green Infrastructure Workshop in Norfolk, VA. The workshop focused on mapping of natural areas and how to interpret those materials. Plum Tree Island was consistently highlighted as one of the largest tracts of important habitat within the region.